



## Run-on Sentences

Handout courtesy of Angela Gulick

To understand run-on sentences, you have to first understand how to identify individual sentences.

### What Is a Sentence?

A complete sentence is made up of two or more parts:

- **A subject** (who or what is the sentence about? Who or what is performing the action?)
- **A verb** (what action is taking place? Sometimes, an action is just a state of being or existence.)
- **Sometimes a "completer"** (are there any other words required to form a complete thought?)

Here is an example: Last night I ate too many enchiladas for supper.

- **Subject:** Who or what is the focus on the sentence? **I**
- **Verb:** What about these people? What are they doing? **I ate**
- **Completer:** I ate what? This sentence needs something to finish it off, to make it a complete thought: **I ate too many enchiladas for supper.**

Here is another example: Steven claimed.

- **Subject:** Who or what is the focus of the sentence? **Steven**
- **Verb:** What about this person? What is he doing? **Steven claimed.**
- **Completer:** Steven claimed what? This sentence is not yet complete because we need to know what Steven claimed. He saw Bigfoot? He won the lottery? His favorite television show is *Supernatural*? This sentence needs something to finish the thought.

### What is a Run-on Sentence?

A run-on sentence occurs when you have two separate sentences, back to back, with nothing to divide them. There are four main ways to fix run-on sentences:

#### Method 1: Period + Capital Letter (Sentence. Sentence.)

- You want to avoid separating all sentences from each other in this way; otherwise, your writing sounds choppy and can come off as sounding like a child wrote it.

#### Method 2: Comma + Coordinating Conjunction (Sentence, coordinating conjunction sentence.)

- There are 7 coordinating conjunctions in all of the universe: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so** (those words spell out the word **fanboys**). Coordinating conjunctions show how two the ideas are related.

#### Method 3: Semicolon (Sentence; sentence.)

- Writers use semicolons when the ideas are particularly related to each other. The writers want readers to see the two ideas as partners of equal importance.

#### Method 4: Semicolon + Conjunctive Adverb + Comma (Sentence; conjunctive adverb, sentence.)

- This is probably the most sophisticated way to connect two sentences together. Conjunctive adverbs show how the two ideas are related. Here are some examples of conjunctive adverbs:

accordingly	consequently	however	meanwhile	nonetheless	then
also	finally	incidentally	moreover	now	thereafter
anyway	further	indeed	namely	otherwise	therefore
besides	furthermore	instead	nevertheless	similarly	thus
certainly	hence	likewise	next	still	undoubtedly

## Examples

<b>Original Run-on Sentence</b>	I forgot to turn the oven timer on when I was making my brownies last night the brownies now look like little pieces of coal.
<b>Sentence. Sentence.</b>	I forgot to turn the oven timer on when I was making my brownies last night. <u>The</u> brownies now look like little pieces of coal.
<b>Sentence, <u>coordinating conjunction</u> sentence.</b>	I forgot to turn the oven timer on when I was making my brownies last night, <u>and</u> the brownies now look like little pieces of coal.
<b>Sentence; sentence.</b>	I forgot to turn the oven timer on when I was making my brownies last night; the brownies now look like little pieces of coal.
<b>Sentence; <u>conjunctive adverb</u>, sentence.</b>	I forgot to turn the oven timer on when I was making my brownies last night; <u>therefore</u> , the brownies now look like little pieces of coal.

<b>Original Run-on Sentence</b>	Many people are fans of going out on New Year's Eve I would rather stay home and eat Chinese food.
<b>Sentence. Sentence.</b>	Many people are fans of going out on New Year's Eve. <u>I</u> would rather stay home and eat Chinese food.
<b>Sentence, <u>coordinating conjunction</u> sentence.</b>	Many people are fans of going out on New Year's Eve, <u>but</u> I would rather stay home and eat Chinese food.
<b>Sentence; sentence.</b>	Many people are fans of going out on New Year's Eve; I would rather stay home and eat Chinese food.
<b>Sentence; <u>conjunctive adverb</u>, sentence.</b>	Many people are fans of going out on New Year's Eve; <u>however</u> , I would rather stay home and eat Chinese food.

<b>Original Run-on Sentence</b>	This past winter was really mild my dog and I have spent a lot of time walking in the park.
<b>Sentence. Sentence.</b>	This past winter was really mild. <u>My</u> dog and I have spent a lot of time walking in the park.
<b>Sentence, <u>coordinating conjunction</u> sentence.</b>	This past winter was really mild, <u>so</u> my dog and I have spent a lot of time walking in the park.
<b>Sentence; sentence.</b>	This past winter was really mild; my dog and I have spent a lot of time walking in the park.
<b>Sentence; <u>conjunctive adverb</u>, sentence.</b>	This past winter was really mild; <u>consequently</u> , my dog and I have spent a lot of time walking in the park.